



Beijing Jiaotong University

2020 Summer Session

PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy

Course Outline

Term: July 13–August 7, 2020

Class Hours: 12:00–13:50 (Monday through Thursday Review Friday)

Course Code: PHIL 101

Instructor: Dr. Gurnis

Home Institution: Washington University

Office Hours: TBA

Email: musa.gurnis@aol.com

Credit: 4

Class Hours: This course will have 52 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, 8 professor office hours, 8 TA discussion session hours, and 4 review session hours.

Introduction:

Welcome to the study of philosophy. This course samples texts from a wide range of world intellectual traditions—European, Asian, African, South American, and Arabic—to ask fundamental questions. What is reality? How do we know? What does it mean to be human? Is there a God? How should we live? How should we treat others? Students will learn to analyze complex arguments, and to compare philosophical positions. More importantly, students will learn to ask themselves questions about things we usually take for granted or assume are certain; to think creatively about problems that continue to baffle us; and to reflect on ways that philosophy might change our lives.

Attendance Policy:

Students may miss up to two classes for personal reasons. Please send me an email if you are unable to attend class. Because of the short time frame of the class, late assignments must be turned in the following day.



Texts:

All readings are drawn from *An Introduction to World Philosophy: A Multicultural Reader*, edited by Daniel Bonevac and Stephen H. Phillips (Oxford: 2009), and will be provided as pdfs.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Midterm (15%):

Final Exam (15%):

Assignment 1: (20%): Students will write 800-1000 words (roughly 3-4 pages) summarizing and analyzing any argument from the reading.

Assignment 2 (20%): Students will write 800-1000 words putting any two philosophical positions from the reading into dialogue with each other.

Assignment 3 (20%): Students will write 800-1000 words developing a philosophical position of their own that addresses any of the major questions raised in the class.

Class Participation (10%): Philosophy is not a spectator sport. Each student is expected to make substantive contributions to class each week. Students should be able to demonstrate a strong grasp of the assigned reading, to think critically, and to pose thoughtful, creative questions.

Schedule:

Week 1

Mon: Introduction (Socrates and asking questions): Plato, from *Laches* in *Introduction to World Philosophy*, p. 75-82

Tues: Are people good or bad?: Mencius, from *Mencius* in *IWP*, p. 44-52; Xunzi, from "That the Nature Is Evil in *IWP*, p. 52-57

Wed: Suffering and desire: the Buddha, from *The First Sermon* and *The Dhammapada* in *IWP*, p. 16-22

Thurs: Feeling right: David Hume, from *A Treatise on Human Nature* in *IWP*, p. 153-157

Friday: Review. Assignment 1 Due.

Week 2

Mon: You Kant Do That!: Immanuel Kant, from *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* p. 157-168

Tues: Greatest Happiness Principle: John Stuart Mill, from *Utilitarianism* in *IWP*, p. 174-184

Wed: Communitarian Utilitarianism of the Akan tribe, pdf.

Thurs: Review

Fri: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 3



Mon: Assignment 2 Due: Mind/body problem: René Descartes, from *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *IWP*, p. 264-270; Elizabeth of Bohemia, letters to Descartes, p. 271-277; Avicenna, from *On the Soul* in *IWP*, p.372

Tues: What is a person?: Leke Adeofe, from “Personal Identity in African Metaphysics” in *IWP*, p. 301-305

Wed: Does the self exist?: David Hume, from *A Treatise of Human Nature* in *IWP*, p. 282-290

Thurs: Am I a man dreaming of a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming of a man?: Zhuangzi, from *Zhuangzi* in *IWP*, p. 320-328

Friday: Review: Assignment 3 Due

Week 4

Mon: The world exists and so do I: Augustine, from *Answer to Skeptics* and *City of God*, in *IWP* p. 363-6

Tues: Does God exist?: St. Thomas Aquinas, from *Summa Theologica* in *IWP*, p. 535-541

Wed: Flesh and blood philosophy: Miguel de Unamuno, from *The Tragic Sense of Life* in *IWP*, p. 402-406

Thurs: Review.

Friday: FINAL EXAM